

PETERSFIELD,

March 18th, 1914.

**TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PETERSFIELD
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to submit my Annual Medical Report of the District for 1913.

POPULATION.

The area of the Petersfield Urban District (exclusive of area covered with water) is 1,428 acres and the population estimated to the middle of 1913 was 4,140, the number of inhabited houses being 938. In 1901 the population was 3,265 and the number of inhabited houses 721.

BIRTH RATE.

During the year 1913, 74 births (43 male and 31 female) were reported in the Urban District, in the previous year the births numbered 86. The births in 1913 were equivalent to an annual birth rate of 17·8 per 1,000—the average for England and Wales being 23·9. The birth rate for the District remains an exceedingly low one—almost the lowest on record and considerably less than the rate recorded for the whole of England and Wales, which also remains only a fraction higher than any figure previously recorded. The rapidly decreasing birth rate of not only this District but of the whole Country is a matter to be noted and surely with grave importance.

DEATH RATE.

During the year 1913, 48 deaths were reported in the Urban District, this number (if all those dying in the District are included) would be equivalent to a death rate of 11·5 per 1,000, but of the 48 deaths reported in the District, 12 occurred in persons not belonging thereto, namely, 5 in the Union Infirmary,

Death Rate (continued).

6 in the Cottage Hospital, and one a visitor to the Town. A corrected total of deaths belonging to the District brings the number to 39, equivalent to a death rate of 9·4 per 1,000, the death rate of England and Wales being 13·7, this being almost the lowest record ever noted. The death rate of the District is therefore a remarkably low one, of the 48 deaths, 7 occurred in children under 1 year of age, equivalent to a death rate of 95·7 per 1,000 of the births registered, the corresponding rate for England and Wales being 109 per 1,000. Eleven deaths occurred in persons over 70 years of age, of these 3 were over 80. Four inquests were held in the Urban District during 1913, two being cases of accidental death, one of suicide, and in one death was proved to be due to natural causes.

OCCUPATION OF INHABITANTS.

The occupations of the inhabitants of the District is chiefly in trade and domestic pursuits. There are two breweries and two laundries in the District.

WATER SUPPLY.

In my last report I referred to the work in hand for supplying water to the Bell Hill area and that it was anticipated the supply would be available in the summer. This prediction was fulfilled and it can now be said that the area of the Urban Council (except a very small portion), and also considerable parts of Sleet and Steep, are furnished with a constant supply of excellent water. The last section of the work included the building of a Reservoir at Stoner Hill, having a storage capacity of 9,500 gallons, at a higher level than the springs at Oakshott. The water is raised by hydraulic pumps at the old pumping station and only under very exceptional circumstances is it anticipated that the steam pumps, which have been fixed in readiness for emergencies, will be required. The new supply from Stoner Hill is brought down as far as Rushes farm, but is not connected with the old pipes because such water at the much higher pressure

Water Supply (continued).

would naturally drive the lower pressure water to the Reservoirs at Tilmore, and moreover, it is probable that many of the house fittings would not bear the additional strain.

In my last report I stated it had been unnecessary to do any pumping to the Tilmore Reservoirs as there has been an ample supply flowing by gravitation and this has continued. It is estimated that the average daily consumption is 100,000 gallons and that the supply from the springs cannot be far short—under normal conditions—of double that quantity.

An improvement has been effected with regard to the supply to the Tilmore District where difficulty was often experienced—when the draught was heavy—in getting a continuous supply. A connection was made at the Reservoirs so that the gravitating flow of water from the springs should pass direct into the Tilmore main.

Now that the second Reservoir at Tilmore has been covered it means that the water is kept under ground from the time it enters the pipes at Oakshott until it is drawn from the taps in the consumers' houses.

MILK SUPPLY.

The Dairies, Cowsheds and Milk Shops have been carefully inspected and with exception of a few minor defects I can report they are well kept and in a good sanitary condition. I have had several samples of milk analysed during the year and in every case have had a satisfactory report.

FOOD INSPECTION.

The Slaughterhouses and Bakehouses have been inspected and found to be kept in a satisfactory and sanitary condition.

Under the Food and Drugs Act, 15 samples have been officially taken and examined during the year, of these 13 were found to be genuine, and 2 to be adulterated—a specimen of New Milk which was found to be deficient in milk fat to extent of 23·4



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Food Inspection (continued).

per cent of the minimum quantity of milk fat which genuine milk should contain according to the Sale of Milk Regulations, 1901—the other specimen was one of Whiskey which was found to have 11·31 excess of water. In both these cases proceedings were taken under the Act and fines inflicted.

HOUSE ACCOMODATION.

Under the Housing and Town Planning Act 31 houses have been inspected in the District during the past year. I append to my Report a summary of actions taken during that period under the Act. Eight houses were condemned as unfit for habitation, and where defects were found they were remedied. In most cases these defects were remedied after representing same and negotiating with owners of the property without resorting to formal notices under the Act.

REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL OF HOUSE REFUSE.

The scavenging of the District is regularly and satisfactorily carried out.

NUISANCES.

It is again most satisfactory to report that under the Public Health Act no serious nuisances have been reported to me during the past year. Under the careful vigilance of Mr. Keates, our Sanitary Inspector, several minor nuisances have been discovered and in nearly every case, under his direction, the trouble has been remedied.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

I received during the year notification of 27 cases of infectious diseases. Fifteen cases of Scarlet Fever, 6 of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, 1 Tubercular Meningitis, 1 of Diphtheria, 1 of Typhoid Fever and 3 of Measles. The case of Diphtheria, and 13 of those of Scarlet Fever were removed to the Isolation Hospital and treated there. The much needed enlargement of the Isolation Hospital is now being carried out and in the course of a few months the new Hospital will be available.

HEATH RECREATION GROUND.

During the past year the rights of the Lords of the Manor over the Heath have been secured and there can be no doubt this will prove a great asset to the Town. Although the inhabitants had rights of recreation secured to them under the Enclosures Award made about 50 years ago, which could not be taken away, yet undoubtedly it will be an advantage to the Council to have complete control. By-laws and regulations will in due course be made and other improvements effected, which will be both attractive and beneficial. It will mean some amount of expenditure but nevertheless it will be conducive to health.

The health of the Petersfield Urban District during the past year has been exceptionally good—the exceedingly low death rate is a noticeable feature—and in submitting my Report with the accompanying tables of statistics, I beg respectfully to consider that the general health and sanitary condition of the District must be considered satisfactory.

I have the honour to remain, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

H. M. BROWNFIELD,

Medical Officer of Health,
Petersfield Urban District.

